

WEST VIRGINIA -ELECTION CONNECTION-

Your source for Election News from Secretary of State Natalie E. Tennant

Issue 32 – May 15, 2012

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25 Weeks Until Election Day!

On Tuesday, May 15, there will be exactly 25 weeks until the November 6 General Election!

Certification of Federal Candidates

Recently, this office has come under fire for following the United States Constitution and West Virginia Constitution and certifying a convicted felon to run for the office of President of the United States. The Secretary of State's Office followed the law when it came to certifying the candidate, and Secretary Tennant has been clear in her response: Any person suggesting she **should not** have certified the candidate is really suggesting that she break the law and break her oath as the state's chief elections officer. Some are suggesting that West Virginia law, which says those under conviction of a felony are not eligible to vote and therefore not eligible to hold **state, county, or municipal office**, should have been applied to a **federal** candidate, but it cannot. This office, as the office where candidates file to run, can only certify or not certify a candidate based on what is reported on their certificate of announcement and that they filed that form completely and on time, that it was notarized, and that the filing fee was paid. Federal law, namely the United States Constitution, lays out the requirements of a person who is running for President: they are at least 35 years old, a natural-born citizen, and that they have lived in the country for the last 14 years. The State of West Virginia cannot make laws adding more eligibility requirements on the people seeking the office of President of the United States. There are only five people in this entire state (our two senators and three representatives) who even have the standing to start such an initiative, which would be an amendment to the United States Constitution. While we can't change the US Constitution, the role the state plays is in the process of ballot access. We are willing to work with the legislature and county clerks to explore changing the procedures.

Reporting Election Night Results

Special thanks to the counties who worked so closely with the Secretary of State's Office to transmit their unofficial election results to the Capitol late in the night on Election Day (and even into the next morning!). Your dedication to making sure the citizens of West Virginia have a place to go to get accurate and complete election results is greatly appreciated. What made it so valuable is that thanks to the counties, we were able to show how many votes were cast in races where the primary candidate was unopposed. Other media outlets simply ignored those races, focusing only on races where there was a contest.

Canvassing Is Nearing Completion; Video Explains Canvass Process

As of Tuesday morning, more than 30 counties had completed their canvass and had declared their results to the Secretary of State's Office. To see which counties have declared their results, check out www.wvsos.com and follow the "Election Results" banner at the top of the page. Also, thanks to Kanawha County Clerk Vera McCormick who was gracious enough to allow our cameras in to the Courthouse Annex to film their canvass. The footage went in to a short explanatory video that explains the canvass and recount process. Thanks to Clerk McCormick, her hard-working staff, and the Kanawha Board of Canvassers, the people of West Virginia now have an idea of exactly what it means to "canvass" an election. Hopefully this will interest more people in the elections process, and lead to more citizens willing to be poll workers. The video can be seen on www.wvsos.com.

An Update on the Continued Improvements to the Elections Division Website

The elections division homepage now has a new look and layout. All the information that you would normally access on our site is still present, but some of the pages may have new layouts, additional information, or moved locations. If you cannot find a page that you normally access via your saved favorites in your web browser, then please navigate to: <http://www.sos.wv.gov/ELECTIONS/Pages/default.aspx> and use the modified categories to navigate to the information that you require. Some notable additions to information on our website include the following:

- A new Resource Center:
<http://www.sos.wv.gov/elections/resource/Pages/default.aspx>
- You can see historic voter turnout by party:
http://www.sos.wv.gov/elections/history/Pages/Voter_Turnout_Party.aspx
- Voter registration totals now date back to 2006:
http://www.sos.wv.gov/elections/history/Pages/Voter_Registration_Totals.aspx

We will continue to improve our elections website and make as much information transparently available to county clerks, motor voter agencies, and the general public. If you have general questions, have trouble finding information on the new webpages, or notice that information is missing on the website, then please contact Greg Watson via email at gwatson@wvsos.com.

Have an idea?

Is there something that you want to see addressed in the Election Connection? The goal of this newsletter is to keep everyone up to date about challenges facing election officials in West Virginia and to inform everyone about best practices that are being put into place. If you have an idea for a topic, have a question, or if you think there is a subject that election officials around the state would be interested in, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretary of State's Office. You can contact the Elections Division by email at elections@wvsos.com or (304) 558-6000 or Jake Glance directly at jglance@wvsos.com. Your input is appreciated.